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AUTHOR Keierleber, Dennis L.
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ABSTRACT

BORN FREE is a collaborative training and development effort of university-based counseling psychologists and field site teachers, counselors, and administrators. Its purpose is to reduce career-related sex role stereotyping in educational institutions from the elementary through the post-high years. Since much of the project's work is still in the developmental stages, this report describes briefly the procedures being used to evaluate BORN FREE. It focuses primarily on the process of change within participating institutions. There are two general concerns in evaluation: (1) product evaluation, which includes both deliverable products (videotapes and training packets) and observable products (changes in institutional practices); and (2) process evaluation, which concerns the activities by which the products are achieved. (Author/BP)

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BORN FREE: Reducing Career-Related Sex-Role Stereotyping in Educational Institutions

Process and Product Evaluation

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Dennis L. Keierleber

University of Minnesota

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Process and Product Evaluation

Project BORN FREE's size and complexity offer a number of different facets upon which to focus evaluation. From the beginning, BORN FREE has had two general evaluation concerns. Product evaluation is one concern. This area includes both deliverable products, such as the color videotapes and training packets; and observable products, such as the changes in behaviors, policies, and practices of educators and their institutions. The other concern is process evaluation; the activities by which BORN FREE achieves these products. Since much of this project's work is still in the developmental stages, this report describes briefly the procedures being followed to evaluate BORN FREE and focuses primarily on the process of change within participating BORN FREE institutions.

Development of the Evaluation Perspective

Initially, BORN FREE's evaluation plan centered around four basic steps described in the earlier presentation on staff development and the change process (Hansen, 1977). BORN FREE staff identified need and problem areas through a systems analysis of each participating institution, supplementing these findings with those of the literature reviews. Based upon these combined findings, the videotapes, training packets, and staff training workshop format were developed into an intervention plan. One primary implementation of this intervention was the BORN FREE Summer Institute recently completed. Other interventions will come through local workshops planned at participating institutions during the 1977-78 academic year. The fourth step is to evaluate

the effects of the interventions, both upon the individuals attending the workshops and upon the institutions during the second year of the Project. Major activity for organizational intervention and change was expected to occur during the second year of the project, following the first year of development.

However, as Project work began, a number of events occurred; some sooner than expected, some to a much greater extent than expected, and some not at all expected. For example, within the first months of the Project, several of the field practitioners began planning and implementing their own interventions within their own institutions. Among other activities, they established their own planning and discussion groups and sponsored programs during regular inservice days. In other institutions, the initial announcement of BORN FREE's existence and the institution's affiliation with the Project generated strong reactions, both positive and negative, among many faculty and staff members. A number of unexpected events also occurred. Key administrators who were both supportive and instrumental in involving certain institutions in the Project were replaced by new administrators who were much less supportive of the issues which concerned BORN FREE. Other institutions were given notice of extensive budget cuts and staff terminations and transfers for the following year. Several of the persons affected were part of the BORN FREE field staff.

Almost from the beginning, BORN FREE had a definite impact on participating institutions. At the same time, several situations and conditions emerged in these institutions that were potentially powerful influences upon the planned interventions

of BORN FREE. To gain a better understanding of the impact BORN FREE was having upon these institutions and also the impact these institutions were having upon the Project, these events needed to be incorporated systematically into an overall model of the change process, and, thus, required a broader focus and structure for evaluation.

A Model of Educational Change for Evaluation

The model chosen to focus and structure examination of the change process and Project outcomes is an adaptation of one developed by the Rand Corporation for a nationwide study of federally supported innovative educational change projects. Reports by Berman and McLaughlin (1974, 1975) describe the model and study more fully.

This model emphasizes an implementation perspective and begins with several assumptions. The first assumption is that there are distinctly different stages to the process of innovative educational change. Second, implementation of change agents projects is characterized by a process of mutual adaptation: an interaction of the project goals and methods adapting to the realities of the institutional setting and the institution and its members adapting to the demands of the project. Third, implementation strategies, and not just a specific educational method, exert a major influence upon project outcomes. Different projects or persons in different institutions may employ the same type of educational method, such as a staff development workshop, but implement it in quite different ways, leading to different outcomes. The fourth assumption is that characteristics of the institutional setting have a strong influence upon the course and impact of a change agent project.

These assumptions underlie a more tentative view of implementing change. As Greenwood, Mann, and McLaughlin (1975) indicate, this view assumes problems and consequences of a change agent project are not always predictable, the course of implementation cannot be confidently or completely anticipated, and that some important factors such as unanticipated events and crisis situations, cannot be predicted at all.

With these assumptions as a background, the evaluation of BORN FREE is examining three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and outcomes and continuation.

In the initiation phase, major concerns are how and why did institutions and key persons become involved in BORN FREE; and what kinds of backgrounds and expectations did these institutions and persons bring to the Project? One important factor is the extent to which issues of career development and sex-role stereotyping are perceived as problem or need areas in an institution and by whom, a school district administrator, a principal, a small group of faculty and counselors, or by all these persons? Another factor is whether the institution has a long-range concern for change or a history of involvement, with positive or negative consequences, in the areas of career development or sex-role stereotyping. In several institutions, BORN FREE has followed recently implemented affirmative action and TITLE IX compliance activities. Thus, the Project began with the faculty and staff responding, "We have had enough for a while!" One general hypothesis stemming from this phase is that the extent and type of impact BORN FREE has upon an institution may be influenced

by the groundwork laid there before the Project's initial contact with the institution.

BORN FREE currently is in the implementation phase of the program. The major question in this stage is: What happens when the project settles down to the hard work of trying to influence the behavior of educators (Mann, 1976)? The primary evaluative task is to document what activities BORN FREE staff plan and implement in their institutions. The process of mutual adaptation is a central focus during this phase. Since BORN FREE was designed to be flexible to the needs of individual institutions, the adaptation of Project implementation strategies to the institutional settings is to be expected. In addition to documenting what adaptations take place, the evaluation also focuses upon why these adaptations take place and with what reactions within the institutions. These reactions partially constitute the adaptations of the institutional setting to the presence and the activities of BORN FREE. A fundamental goal, then, of BORN FREE is to determine what implementation strategies are more or less effective in bringing about change in the context of the different institutional settings.

Since BORN FREE is still in progress, little can be said at this time about the outcomes and continuation phase. A primary concern is to assess what changes have taken place within individuals and institutions.

Assessment of changes in knowledge and attitudes of participants in BORN FREE workshops is one method of assessing outcomes. Within the participating institutions, evidence of effectiveness will include such readily observable indicators as continued activities and changes in policies and practices.

A second concern for this phase is the problem of how to bring about enduring change in an educational institution? What factors ensure continuation of the program, especially after official contact between a project and an institution ends. The life span of BORN FREE does not permit a long term follow-up to answer this question. The information collected during the first year of the Project, however, may help provide a partial answer to this question, as it is related to continued activities in participating institutions next year. Also, BORN FREE's official contact with participating institutions will end several months before the end of the funding period, allowing some short term follow-up.

BORN FREE is a comprehensive program of planned change with specified rationale, procedures, and interventions. In terms of evaluation, the approach is a broad inquiry in which these interventions are one major component in a complex and multifaceted process of change. In studying both process and product, evaluation concerns still center around the basic question of what enduring effects does BORN FREE have upon educational institutions? We have expanded the study of this question, however, to include how these effects are influenced by (a) initial characteristics of both the Project and institutions; (b) the strategies used in implementing the Project in different institutions; and (c) the ways in which both the Project and the institutions adapt to each other during the life of the Project.

Evaluation Data and Methods

To tap the wide range of factors that might be influential in the change process of BORN FREE, a number of information sources

and data collection methods were employed. One major method was the system analysis and needs assessment conducted by field staff in each Project institution. Each report included such items as demographic and descriptive information on staff and students in the institution, as well as on student's parents and the community served by the institution; on current and past activities in the areas of career development or career education and sex-based issues, such as affirmative action programs; on supports for and resistances to change efforts; on facilitators and inhibitors to student development; and on data sources and methods of data collection. Another method was extensive interviews with project managers, assistants, and field staff. Interview outlines were developed following the different phases of the changeprocess defined by the Rand model. Interviews with field staff were conducted in late May to obtain a current status report on the institution at the end of the school year.

Throughout the year project staff completed weekly logs to monitor their activities and report critical incidents. Project staff and institution administrators completed questionnaires near the end of the year to identify past problems and future needs. A file of correspondence, memoranda, and institution newsletters and bulletins also was maintained.

Although much of the information collected for BORN FREE has yet to be analyzed and summarized, some factors affecting the change process stand out from the case studies being prepared for each of the Project institutions. The issue of sex bias, the connotations carried by the labels of sex-role stereotyping, sex discrimination, affirmative action, and Title IX, still generate

strong emotions among many persons and have been the center of most of the problems in Project institutions. BORN FREE is concerned about broadening career options of both women and men, a concept that should be acceptable to all educators. However, recent activities, such as affirmative action and Title IX compliance programs, in several Project institutions created negative attitudes or a sense of satiation with the topic before the Project made contact with the institutions. Thus, the Project began in several institutions with the identification of a feminist program and with all the resistance that has been generated by this label from previous activities.

In one participating senior high school, BORN FREE quickly became labelled as a "Woman's Liberation" project because of the involvement of some of the school district's affirmative action committee members as field staff members. The field staff had to spend most of the year countering resistance; and clarifying the concepts of the Project as a program for both men and women, for career development, and for broadening options. A similar situation occurred at a participating junior high school. A number of activities had been planned initially for the school year in the school. When an announcement and description of the Project were circulated to the faculty, the field staff indicated the reaction was strong and hostile. The planned activities were cancelled so as not to alienate the staff. In this situation, the school's assistant principal, who had been active in women's issues for several years, was a member of the field staff. Field staff indicated the Project was perceived by faculty as a sex bias

program, because of the assistant principal's attachment to it.

In those institutions where the most resistance has been encountered, the field staff have noted that those educators who have labelled the Project as a feminist program are in the minority among staff. Most persons within these institutions are supportive of the Project or are at least neutral; they are interested but not involved, or they do not perceive a great need for change in this area although they do not oppose the Project's goals. However, the small, resistant groups tend to be vocal and influential in setting the tone for what activities occur institution-wide.

One original assumption of BORN FREE was that by focusing upon the career development theme as a vehicle to effect changes in the area of sex-role stereotyping, change efforts would be less threatening to educators, and educators would participate more readily in a program in this area. The career development context focuses the problem upon the needs of students and less upon any labelling of educators' behaviors as being sexist.

In some project institutions, field staff have maintained a focus upon the career development component of BORN FREE and have encountered more interest and acceptance. As one pattern of Project adaptation to the institutional setting, in institutions where field staff perceived a high level of resistance, intervention plans have moved to a stronger emphasis on career concerns of students with less emphasis on the sex-role stereotyping component of BORN FREE.

A second problem that seems to be present across several institutions as it relates to the change process is the demands

and requirements of the jobs of educators. Although previous comments have focused upon resistance generated by the terms, sex bias and sex-role stereotyping, as a criticism of the values and behaviors of educators, as great a source of resistance may reside in the working conditions of educators. Field staff in almost all participating institutions described heavy work schedules as a major problem in encouraging faculty to participate in any Project-related activity. Although one goal of BORN FREE is to assist educators to examine their own values and behaviors that may inhibit or facilitate both the sex-role and career socialization of students in everyday interactions; educators' perceptions of involvement in a project of this nature often are those of additional committee work, coordination of another new program, or adding more content to an already overcrowded curricular offering.

Persons currently involved in BORN FREE have expressed an interest to work with staff in their institutions and also to use learning materials, such as those developed by Project staff, with their students. These persons are highly committed to the goals of the Project, see a need for change in the area of career-related sex-role stereotyping, and are willing to devote time to extra activities within their work schedules. The problem arises in increasing awareness and commitment to action among nonvolunteers who may not oppose the values espoused by a project such as BORN FREE, but see any type of involvement as an extra demand upon already limited time. Thus, one major concern for evaluation is identification of implementation strategies that can increase educators' voluntary participation in change efforts.

One final concern related to implementing change is methods for increasing awareness of need, gaining support and commitment, and initiating educator activity in the areas of career development and sex-role stereotyping. As mentioned in the previous paper on staff development and change process (Hansen, 1977) the most effective methods for eliciting institutional response to Project concerns this past year have been those that create problem ownership among educators. Examples from two postsecondary institutions participating in BORN FREE describe some implementation strategies for establishing problem ownership. In one postsecondary institution, a small liberal arts college, the field staff had difficulty determining an effective way to implement change within the institution. A summary of systems analysis interviews with faculty, administrators, counselors, students, and other staff indicated that a number of faculty disliked staff development programs; considered career development an inappropriate concern in their duties as instructors of liberal arts courses; and considered sex-related issues no longer a major problem because of recent progress made in this area by a college-wide program on the status of women. One area of institutional concern however, was faculty advising. The administrators, faculty, and students all considered this a high need area and in need of improvement. The field staff, based in the college's student development center, have begun to develop plans for consultation with faculty to assist them in improving advising skills. Within this program, they plan to incorporate career development concepts and related sex-role stereotyping problems. In another postsecondary institution, a community college, the field staff had made several attempts to

establish a support group of faculty and staff to discuss issues related to BORN FREE goals and develop plans for activities within the college. Although the support groups were established, they did not move beyond the discussion stage. Major factors for reluctance of faculty to engage in active planning were already heavy work loads and some negative experiences the faculty had from involvement in previous projects. Little recognition and support had been given by the administration in the past for faculty involvement in activities other than those required for their jobs.

In one more attempt, the field staff identified from the systems analysis those courses with a large imbalance of male and female enrollments. They discussed these findings with the course instructors and learned the instructors also were concerned about these disparities, partly because declining enrollments threatened the future continuation of the courses. The field staff brought these instructors together to discuss ways to revise, publicize, and make the offerings more attractive to both males and females. With this group as a base, the field staff involved other interested persons, sought, and received approval from the college's faculty council to create a formal task force to study the problem and recommend procedures to stimulate student enrollment in these courses.

These examples provide some illustration of the range of factors that operate during the course of change in educational institutions. Events prior to the project's involvement in the institution; the demands of the institution upon the project; and the adaptation of both project and institution to each other, all

will influence the final outcome of a change agent project such as BORN FREE. As Lieberman and Griffin (1976) indicate, "These three issues of complexity -- the innovation, the setting, and the fusion of the two -- need and demand careful questioning and analysis, not in isolation, but in conjunction (p. 418)." Through a broad examination of the interplay of project and institution as part of the evaluation of BORN FREE, the answer to the question of how to bring about enduring change in educational institutions may become a little less complex.

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